

TO RESPOND TO SUCH A QUESTION BUT, AS I'VE SAID, I'D LIKE TO APPROACH AN ANSWER BY A POST-MORTEM OF THE PROCESS OF ACHIEVING CONSENSUS ON THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION.

ONE KEY TO THE PROCESS AT PUNTA WAS THE FORMATION AND ROLE OF WHAT I WOULD CALL STRATEGIC ALLIANCES I.E. SINGLE INTEREST LOBBIES OF COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE BIG THREE BLOCS. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUCH ALLIANCES DEPENDED, HOWEVER, ON EXPLOITING DIVISIONS AMONG THE BLOCS -- ALTHOUGH IN THE EVENT ONLY THE U.S./E.C. DIVISIONS MATTERED.

THE TWO MAJOR UNRESOLVED ISSUES AT PUNTA WERE AGRICULTURE AND SERVICES (THE TWO OTHER NEW ISSUES TURNED OUT TO BE LESS CONTENTIOUS ON THE GROUND BUT, CERTAINLY IN THE CASE OF INVESTMENT, LIKELY TO PROVE VERY DIFFICULT DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS). THE RESOLUTION OF BOTH ILLUSTRATE THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC ALLIANCES IN MANEUVERING IN THE INTERSTICES OF BLOC DIVISIONS.

IN THE CASE OF AGRICULTURE THE AUSTRALIANS HAD TAKEN THE LEAD BY FORMING A GROUP OF FOURTEEN COUNTRIES, DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING, BUT EXCLUDING THE BIG THREE. THE GROUP WAS LAUNCHED AT THE END OF AUGUST AT A MEETING AT CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA. THE CAIRNS DECLARATION WAS MUCH